

Statewide News Release

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Be Aware of Bed Bugs

Frankfort, KY (Nov. 9, 2007) – The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) encourages Kentuckians to learn more about bed bugs, a pest that could be lurking in their homes.

“During the 1940s and 1950s, the bed bug was a common pest in many homes,” said Guy Delius, acting director for the division of public health protection and safety. “Although annoying, the bed bug has not been known to carry disease.”

The bed bug is a small, brownish insect that feeds on the blood of animals. It gets its name primarily because it is most active at night and often hides in the tufts and folds of bedding.

Reactions to the bite vary by individual but are generally mild, resulting in itching and swelling at the site of the bite. The most significant health concern stems from scratching the bite, which can lead to secondary infection in rare instances.

Signs that you may have a bed bug infestation include unexplained bites after sleeping; blood spotting or staining on mattresses or bedding; and the observance of insects or their discarded skeletal casings.

Public Health Commissioner William Hacker, M.D., recommends that people who think they may have a problem with bed bugs seek advice from their local health department or health care provider.

Accurate identification of the insect followed by treatment by a licensed pest control company is the most effective means for addressing bed bugs. DPH has developed information to help citizens understand more about these insects.

Additional information can be obtained from the local health department, area pest control specialists or the DPH Web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/info/phps/enviromgmt.htm>.

You may also call DPH staff members, Erica Brakefield, technical consultant in the environmental management branch, at (502) 564-4856, ext. 3732; or Vonia Grabeel, program administrator in the environmental management branch, at (502) 564-4856, ext. 3724.